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WASHINGTON, DC—A provision to block a rate increase proposed by President Bush for Northwest energy consumers was included in a supplemental funding bill passed today in the House. The provision was included at the request of the bipartisan House Northwest Energy Caucus, which is co-chaired by Reps. DeFazio (D-OR), Walden (R-OR) and Hastings (R-WA), and the Northwest senators. The supplemental bill provides emergency funding for Hurricane Katrina reconstruction, operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, border security and preparation for the avian flu.

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) provision will block a Bush administration proposal to capture a portion of BPA future revenues to be used to accelerate repayment of federal debt, rather than to reduce Northwest power rates. Experts estimate the proposal would have raised Northwest power rates by 10 percent.

“The president's proposed rate increase would have placed an unjustified burden on energy consumers in the Northwest,” DeFazio said. “I am pleased that Congress recognized this and agreed to block the increase.

“The bill will also provide critical funding for our troops, including enhanced protective equipment and improved benefits. It will also provide needed funding to the regions hardest hit by hurricanes last year, to better patrol the border and to prepare for an avian flu pandemic.”

The bill, the Fiscal Year 2006 Iraq and Katrina Supplemental Conference Report, provides \$19.8 billion for Katrina reconstruction, \$65.8 billion for the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, \$1.9 billion for border security and \$2.3 billion for avian flu preparations.

What's next? The Senate and the House of Representatives each passed a version of the Supplemental Conference report earlier this year. A conference committee worked out the differences between the two bills and drafted a final bill, which passed the House today. The legislation must pass the Senate one more time before it can be sent to the President to be

signed into law.